

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4005

June 20, 2019

Dr. Rick Toomey
Director
SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
2600 Bull Street Columbia
S.C. 29201

Dear Director Toomey:

My constituents in the Lake Wylie area of York County, South Carolina are facing a draconian water conservation protocol from the area's only provider, the Blue Granite Water Company (BGWC), formerly Carolina Water Service Inc., a subsidiary of Utilities, Inc.

BGWC has adopted a non-essential water use conservation protocol for all Blue Granite Water Customers in the Lake Wylie service area with the stated purpose of promoting water conservation during the summer months. However, this protocol has been enacted outside a drought period under local weather conditions comparable to previous years. Initially instated as a short-term measure on May 18, 2019, the new protocol is scheduled to last much longer, specifically from Friday, May 31, 2019 until October 1, 2019, with the option to be further extended by BGWC. Customers who defy this protocol have been threatened with loss of all water access by the BGWC in a statement released by the company on Monday, June 6, 2019 stating that: "*Repeated non-compliance could result in suspension of the non-complying customer's water service.*" It is deeply worrying to me, that the sole provider of utilities could threaten to end providing such an essential utility as water if their demands are not met. In addition to the many homes forced to follow conservation protocols, thousands have had to endure extended outage periods. These outages have been reported to be the result of spills, line breaks, and leaks, including one on May 18th that caused local businesses to close, schools to dismiss their students, and private homes to go without water entirely for upwards of five hours.

As the moniker Lake Wylie indicates, a local supply issue is inconceivable. Instead, the sudden water shortage, the suggested reason for the conservation protocol, has been explained by the BGWC with reference to population growth. It is true that the Fifth District is growing, and that York County has benefitted from that too. This growth has transpired with predictability since the year 2000, requiring only that the expectations be matched with necessary infrastructure investment.

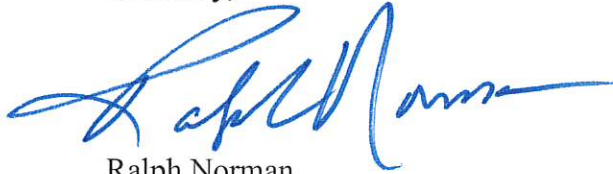
In light of my own concerns and those of my constituents, I would like to address the role BGWC has played in the sudden "water shortage" currently taking its toll on Lake Wylie residents. Since an increase in population cannot alone account for the shortage of water currently being experienced in the Lake Wylie area, it is clear to me that the cause and responsibility for

the shortage lies elsewhere. Specifically, I am concerned by the reports of frequent spills that suggest a fundamental lack of investment in, and maintenance of, essential infrastructure.

As a result, I would like to ascertain that BGWC is in full regulatory compliance with local and federal laws; that essential maintenance rules have been followed; that boil water notices were issued in a timely and appropriate fashion; that the contemporary weather conditions merit BGWC's introduction of conservation protocols; whether BGWC could have predicted or should have anticipated the sudden shortage; and if BGWC has violated consumer protections, regulatory as well as contractual. While fully recognizing the primacy of the State of South Carolina in administering this matter, I recommend you keep the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) abreast of the situation to guarantee their attention and ability to act if necessary.

Water is an essential utility and I hope you will be able to provide certainty that it has not been needlessly or recklessly withheld from BGWC's paying customers, my constituents.

Sincerely,



Ralph Norman
Member of Congress

CC:

Nanette S. Edwards
Executive Director
Office of Regulatory Staff
1401 Main Street, Suite 900
Columbia, S.C. 29201

Mary S. Walker
Acting Regional Administrator
Main Regional Office EPA Region 4
61 Forsyth Street SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

Senator Wes Climer
State Senator
South Carolina General Assembly
604 Gressette Building
Columbia, S.C. 29201

Representative Bruce M. Bryant
State Representative
South Carolina General Assembly
530A Blatt Building
Columbia, S.C. 29201

Jocelyn Boyd & Deborah Easterling
Executive Director's Office
Public Service Commission
101 Executive Center Dr. #100
Columbia, S.C. 29210

Allison Love
Councilwoman
York County Council
P.O. Box 66
York, S.C. 29745

Susan Bromfield
President
Lake Wylie Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 5233
Lake Wylie, S.C. 29710

Representative Thomas E. Pope
State Representative
South Carolina General Assembly
505 Blatt Building
Columbia, S.C. 29201